

REMARKS

The Applicant respectfully requests further examination and reconsideration in view of the amendments above and the arguments set forth fully below. Claims 1-37 were previously pending in this application. Within the Office Action, claims 1-37 have been rejected. By the above amendments, claims 1, 11, 20, 30, and 37 have been amended. Accordingly, claims 1-37 are currently pending.

Double Patenting

Within the Office Action, claims 1-37 have been provisionally rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as claiming the same invention as that of claims 1-49 of co-pending Application No. 09/801,072, and with claims 1-96 of co-pending Application No. 09/801,138.

Specifically, it is stated that claims 1-2, 11-12, 20-21, 30-31, and 37 of the present application conflict with claims 1 and 10-11 of Application No. 09/801,072. Each of the present independent claims 1, 11, 20, 30, and 37 includes the limitation "further wherein each matching item represents a node from within the directory tree structure." No such limitation is claimed in Application No. 09/801,072.

It is also stated that claims 1-2, 11-12, 20-21, 30-31, and 37 of the present application conflict with claims 1-2 and 11-12 of Application No. 09/801,138. Each of the present independent claims 1, 11, 20, 30, and 37 includes the limitation "further wherein each matching item represents a node from within the directory tree structure." No such limitation is claimed in Application No. 09/801,138.

Therefore, the present claims and the claims within the Application No. 09/801,072 and the Application No. 09/801,138 are not directed to the same invention.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Within the Office Action, claims 1-37 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,253,188 issued to Witek et al. (hereafter "Witek"). The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for the following reasons.

Witek teaches a system and method for providing classified ads over the Internet. Internet users can connect to a Newspaper web server and central Web application server to search for and obtain classified ads. Ad records are stored in ad database servers 20 for providing classified ad records on request to application servers 16. To search the ad records, the

search process is divided into two principle parts. The first part includes a system entry and pre-selection sequence, and the second part includes a record selection sequence (Witek, col. 12, lines 10-13). More specifically, in the first part the user enters the system and specifies the category of classified ads to be searched. Thereafter, as the user navigates to the respective selected category, the user further specifies a subcategory for the particular category selected (Witek, col. 12, lines 27-37). The selected category and subcategory pair is identified by a category/subcategory ID 46. The second part of the search process includes entering a formal record selection query containing the specific parameters for the ad records the user wishes to see. The specific parameters are entered as primary selection parameters 60 and as secondary selection parameters 62. In summary, the first part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on category, or in other words a hierarchical search (Witek, col. 13, lines 30-46). The second part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on entered parameters, in other words keyword search or parametric search. Witek does not teach performing a search in which for any given searching step, four different search methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. Specifically, Witek does not teach a search module that includes a keyword search capability, a hierarchical search capability, a dichotomous key search capability, and a parametric search capability such that each utilization of the search module includes the availability of each of these search capabilities.

By the above amendments, the independent claims are amended to clarify that each utilization of the search module includes the ability to use each of the four search methodologies. Any of these four search methodologies can be used in any frequency to complete a research task, either independently or in any combination thereof.

Further, within the Office Action it is stated that Witek teaches a dichotomous key search. To support this assertion, Figure 3, element 70, and column 16, lines 27-50 are cited. The Applicant respectfully disagrees with this conclusion. Column 16, lines 27-50 of Witek refer to a mapped field 70 within the secondary selection parameters 62. Witek teaches that the mapped fields 70 are “yes-no” secondary features that provide details concerning the ad record subject matter. In particular, Witek teaches that the yes-no fields 70 provide up to 32 features which the user can simply check off in a selection menu (such as element 146 in Figure 10) to further describe the ad to be viewed. However, this is no different than a parametric search in which the parameters are limited to yes or no. Within the Office Action, it is stated that the present specification defines a “dichotomous key search” as the ability to instruct users through an answer and question dialog, often yes or no answers, and that Witek also gives the user the

option of answering questions by checking the boxes in the selection menu. It is therefore concluded within the Office Action that these two search options are the same. The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the conclusion that the selection menu 146 including yes-no fields 70 of Witek is the same as a dichotomous key search as described in the present application.

On page 18, lines 6-10, the present specification defines a dichotomous key search as:

“A dichotomous key structure is a binary key structure or two-node tree. This structure is used as a decision tree mechanism to instruct users in deciphering information given in an answer or question dialog, often a yes or no answer. Examples of this include diagnosing a medical disease, diagnosing a mechanical problem, and working a system such as classifying a biological species by physical attributes.”

A decision tree mechanism is well known in the art as a mechanism for progressively moving down a directory tree structure. Movement down the directory tree structure is accomplished by making successive decisions related to posed questions, such as the above described answer or question dialog. This process is similar to that of successively selecting a category from a directory menu, and then selecting a subcategory from the selected category, and so on, to move down an hierarchical directory structure. However, the dichotomous key search differs from the category search, or hierarchical search, by structuring the progression down the directory tree structure in a binary manner. Where a category progression provides multiple options at any given selection opportunity, a dichotomous key progression is specifically configured to provide only two options at any given selection opportunity. Such a structure is represented as a “binary key structure” or a “two-node tree”.

The yes-no fields 70 of Witek are all selected as a single grouping, that is each yes-no field is considered a single parameter within a parametric search. The user selects all desired yes-no fields 70, and then, within a single search step, a search is performed using all selected yes-no fields 70 plus all other input parameters 68, 72 (Figure 3 of Witek), and 142 (Figure 10 of Witek). In contrast, a dichotomous key search, as applied to the present invention, is a succession of searching steps, where each search step divides the remaining database into two based on the user response to a single question. Each search step first requires a user response. The search is then performed, and another user response is then required before a successive search is performed (Specification, Figure 6; page 30, lines 5-24). An example is given on page 30, lines 1-4 of the present specification. In this example, one such use of a dichotomous key

search is at the node for “fiction”, the dichotomous key selections are “fiction books” and “fiction other than books”, or at the node for “Mercedes-Benz” and the dichotomous key selections are “Mercedes-Benz Dealers “ and “Mercedes-Benz Models”. On page 28, lines 16-20 of the present specification, a difference between conventional, or category-configured, directory structures and dichotomous key structures is given:

“In conventional directory structures, where there are multiple entries per node, users can easily become lost. As directories grow and become more complicated, decisions become more difficult and choosing between two paths associated with a dichotomous key structure verses many paths associated with directory structures is simpler. Therefore, the dichotomous tree structure improves ease of use for the user.”

As such, Witek does not teach a dichotomous key search.

Amended independent claim 1 is directed to a method of formatting information within a directory tree structure. The method of claim 1 comprises the steps of performing a search by utilizing a search module, the search module includes a keyword search capability, a hierarchical search capability, a dichotomous key search capability, and a parametric search capability, wherein each utilization of the search module includes the availability of each search capability, to correlate a search criteria to a searchable database for generating one or more matching items, wherein the searchable database is formatted in the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, and further wherein each matching item represents a node from within the directory tree structure, selecting one of the matching items, formatting the collection of related data corresponding to the node of the selected matching item into an encyclopedia-like entry, and displaying the encyclopedia-like entry corresponding to the node of the selected matching item. As discussed above, Witek does not teach using a search module including four different types of search capabilities, where each utilization of the search module includes the availability of each of the four search capabilities. Further, Witek does not teach a search module that includes a dichotomous key search capability. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 2-10 depend on the independent claim 1. As described above, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 2-10 are also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Amended independent claim 11 is directed to an organization system for formatting information within a directory tree structure. The organization system of claim 11 is configured to perform a search by utilizing a search module, the search module includes a keyword search capability, a hierarchical search capability, a dichotomous key search capability, and a parametric search capability, wherein each utilization of the search module includes the availability of each search capability, to correlate a search criteria to a searchable database for generating one or more matching items, wherein the searchable database is formatted in the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each matching item represents a node from within the directory tree structure, to select one of the matching items, to format the collection of related data corresponding to the node of the selected matching item into an encyclopedia-like entry, and to display the encyclopedia-like entry corresponding to the node of the selected matching item. As discussed above, Witek does not teach using a search module including four different types of search capabilities, where each utilization of the search module includes the availability of each of the four search capabilities. Further, Witek does not teach a search module that includes a dichotomous key search capability. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 11 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 12-19 depend on the independent claim 11. As described above, the independent claim 11 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 12-19 are also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Amended independent claim 20 is directed to an organization system for formatting information within a directory tree structure. The organization system of Claim 20 comprises means for performing a search by utilizing a search module, the search module includes a keyword search capability, a hierarchical search capability, a dichotomous key search capability, and a parametric search capability, wherein each utilization of the search module includes the availability of each search capability, to correlate a search criteria to a searchable database for generating one or more matching items, wherein the searchable database is formatted in the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, and further wherein each matching item represents a node from within the directory tree structure, means for selecting

one of the matching items, means for formatting the collection of related data corresponding to the node of the selected matching item into an encyclopedia-like entry, and means for displaying the encyclopedia-like entry corresponding to the node of the selected matching item. As discussed above, Witek does not teach using a search module including four different types of search capabilities, where each utilization of the search module includes the availability of each of the four search capabilities. Further, Witek does not teach a search module that includes a dichotomous key search capability. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 20 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 21-29 depend on the independent claim 20. As described above, the independent claim 20 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 21-29 are also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Amended independent claim 30 is directed to an organization system for formatting information within a directory tree structure. The organization system of Claim 30 comprises one or more computer systems configured to communicate with other systems, and an organization server configured to couple to the one or more computer systems to perform a search by utilizing a search module, the search module includes a keyword search capability, a hierarchical search capability, a dichotomous key search capability, and a parametric search capability, wherein each utilization of the search module includes the availability of each search capability, to correlate a search criteria to a searchable database for generating one or more matching items, wherein the searchable database is formatted in the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, and further wherein each matching item represents a node from within the directory tree structure, to select one of the matching items, to format the collection of related data corresponding to the node of the selected matching item into an encyclopedia-like entry, and to display the encyclopedia-like entry corresponding to the node of the selected matching item. As discussed above, Witek does not teach using a search module including four different types of search capabilities, where each utilization of the search module includes the availability of each of the four search capabilities. Further, Witek does not teach a search module that includes a dichotomous key search capability. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 30 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 31-36 depend on the independent claim 30. As described above, the independent claim 30 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 31-36 are also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Amended independent claim 37 is directed to a method of formatting information within a directory tree structure. The method of Claim 37 comprises the steps of performing a search by utilizing a search module, the search module includes a keyword search capability, a hierarchical search capability, a dichotomous key search capability, and a parametric search capability, wherein each utilization of the search module includes the availability of each search capability, to correlate a search criteria to a searchable database for generating one or more matching items, wherein the searchable database is formatted in the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, and further wherein each matching item represents a node from within the directory tree structure, selecting one of the matching items, formatting the collection of related data corresponding to the node of the selected matching item into an encyclopedia-like entry, wherein the encyclopedia-like entry includes text, graphics, links to related topics within the directory tree structure, links to related web sites external to the directory tree structure, or any combination thereof, and displaying the encyclopedia-like entry corresponding to the node of the selected matching item. As discussed above, Witek does not teach using a search module including four different types of search capabilities, where each utilization of the search module includes the availability of each of the four search capabilities. Further, Witek does not teach a search module that includes a dichotomous key search capability. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 37 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

For the reasons given above, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-37 are now in a condition for allowance, and allowance at an early date would be appreciated. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, he/she is encouraged to call the undersigned attorney at (408) 530-9700.

Respectfully submitted,
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